

# ISSUES

## A Background Paper on Behalf of The Royal Commission on the Northern Environment.

# Chapter 1

## The Land and the People North of 50

The province north of the 50th latitude remains an unknown quantity to the people of Ontario as well as most Canadians. "The Land and the People North of 50" is an introductory chapter to a series of papers dealing with questions which affect the lives of the people in the north and have a bearing on the economic well-being of Ontario's population in the south. Subsequent chapters will reflect the views of these northern people and of people in the south as expressed to the Royal Commission on the Northern Environment in the winter of 1977-78.

This chapter gives an overview of the geography and history of north of 50 and outlines the crucial issues facing the north today.

With a history of economic exploitation of its natural resources, what is the future of the northern

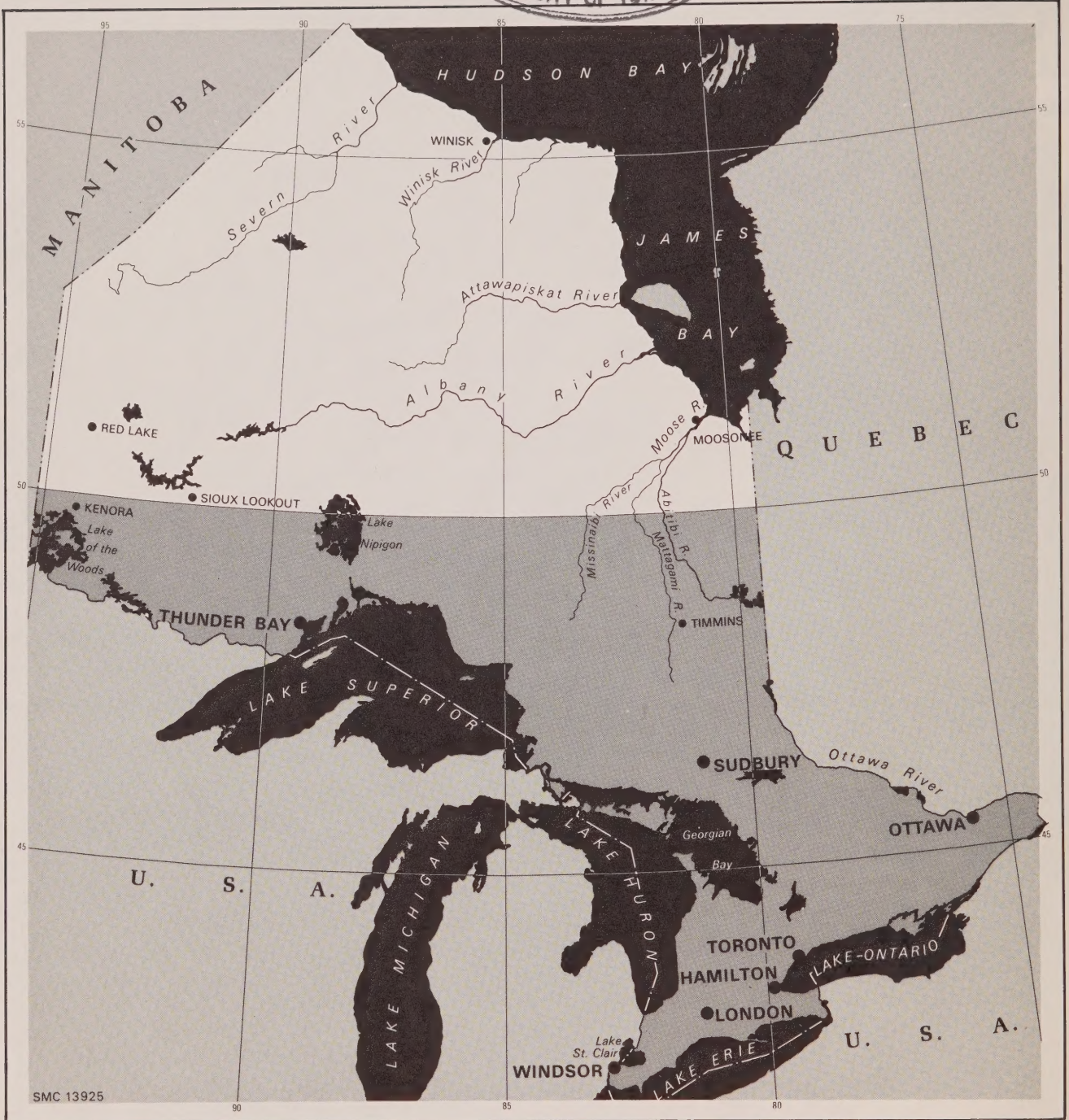
environment, its towns and people who are dependent on logging, mining and tourism?

What is the future of the majority of the population north of 50, the native people?

What are the prospects for such large-scale ventures as Reed (timber, pulp), Onakawana (mining), Ontario Hydro (water diversion), Polar Gas (pipelines)? What effects might they have on the northern environment?

From the south, Ontario's north is seen as a last frontier awaiting development, an area of timber, energy and minerals, the size of Manitoba. Native people, on the other hand, regard the land as sacred and inviolate, the basic tenet of their belief in existence, past, present and future.





More than half of  
Ontario lies North of 50



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## North of 50 — An Overview

Ontario north of the 50th latitude covers more than half of the province. North of the CNR line to Hudson Bay, east of Manitoba to James Bay and Quebec, its 210,000 square mile area is roughly divided between the hard rock Precambrian Shield of the northwest and central area and the boglike Hudson Bay Lowlands of the east. Its people live in tiny, scattered communities, mostly in the northwest or along the bays and waterways of the northeast.

Ontario north of 50 is a vast land of forests, lakes and tundra. Mainly flat, its climate is predominantly severe, and its soil discouragingly sparse. North of 50 is a land of moose, caribou, fur-bearing animals and many species of birds and fish.

The written history of the north begins with the fur trade in the early 17th century, from Hudson Bay southward and from the Great Lakes westward. Involvement of the native people was essential to the fur trade. Gradually, however, the native people began to lose their independent way of life as the number of fur-bearing animals declined and the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly was established.

With the advent of railways in the late 19th and early 20th century, tree-felling and mining evolved as important industries in the north. The harnessing of the water resources of the north for hydro-electric power was yet another development not dependent upon Indian aid, as was the fur trade, but which harmed Indian livelihood through flooding of forest and wild rice areas.

Treaties were negotiated between the federal government and the Indians in the late 19th century (Treaties #3 and #5) and the early 20th century (Treaty #9) to determine title to the land so that development could proceed. The subsequent establishment of Indian reserves led to a further decrease in independence and nomadic traditions. Poverty and alcoholism, and continuing reliance on government assistance through welfare payments and make-work programs, have become the hallmarks of Indian settlements.



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The 50th parallel divides Ontario's 412,000 square miles. Yet only one in every two hundred of the province's eight and a half million residents lives in the north.

Today, the people north of 50 live in small urban settings with about 11,000 people in the larger towns of the southern section, 11,000 on reserve land, and 8,000 in smaller settlements scattered throughout, mainly in the Shield. Whether white or Indian, the people share the difficulties and higher costs of living in isolated communities. They make do with limited and expensive supplies. They face the fact of either economic dependency and poverty, or economic insecurity. Inadequate health, education, transportation and communications services in the north are amongst the range of problems faced by northern residents. Both federal and provincial governments have legislative powers and responsibilities in the north of Ontario. Conflicts between them, and some lack of co-ordination further complicate the lives of northern residents.

The north today reflects three centuries of resource exploitation, with the logging and mining industries remaining the main industrial wage employers today. Tourism and transportation now also account for many jobs. Earned wages do benefit the north but profits generated from developments in that area rarely remain in the north. Searching questions are being asked about the benefits of uncontrolled development — prompted in part by several projects that may be contemplated for the area north of 50—the 19,000 square miles of timber planned to be cut by Reed Ltd., the Polar Gas pipeline traversing the northwest, Ontario Hydro's diversion of the main rivers flowing into James Bay and the Onakawana lignite strip mine in the northeast. The searchlight of public concern has now been cast on the land and the people north of 50.

How will the choice be made between development and conservation? And by whom? What will be the future of native people in the north? How will conflicts between two levels of government who deliver services to northern residents be resolved? How will conflicting uses of the land be balanced?



# Chapter 1

## THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE NORTH OF FIFTY

“Northern Ontario is a living experiment in the co-existence of two peoples with different cultures, different ways of looking at man, and different understandings of the relationship between man and nature. Whether or not their goals for the future of the north are complementary or in conflict is something we do not know, for the conditions do not yet exist for satisfactory communication between the two ways of life. It is my conviction that working together toward practical and fair solutions to urgent questions of economic subsistence is not only a top priority but the best way to clarify the relationships between white and native ways and to discover the common goals underlying the fact of our interdependence.”

Mr. Justice E. P. Hartt

THE ISSUES which trouble the people of Ontario's north, and many others too, cannot be understood without some basic knowledge of life there, of the northern economy, and of the geographical and historical influences which delineate these issues.

Northerners are well aware that to most people in the province, Ontario “north of 50” is still what it was to the early cartographers: a blank area at the top of the map.

### *What Do We Mean by “The North”?*

For the Royal Commission on the Northern Environment, “the North” is that part of Ontario above the 50th parallel of north latitude, extending northward to the shore of Hudson Bay, and bounded on the west by the Province of Manitoba and on the east by James Bay and the Province of Quebec, and in size, comparable to the whole of Manitoba (some 550,000 km<sup>2</sup> or 210,000 square miles) or Saskatchewan. The north comprises slightly more than half of Ontario.

This is the bare geographical description. More striking is the fact that it lies beyond the northern edge of intensive agriculture and industrialized settlement. Only a third of one per cent of Ontario's population lives there, approximately 30,000 in all. Its tiny, scattered communities contrast sharply with the cities which southerners generally associate with “northern Ontario”: Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie. Its traplines and fishing camps are a world apart from the office towers and steel mills to the south that to a considerable extent depend for their existence on the extraction and harvesting of the north's larger settlements. Only a third of the north's inhabitants live in its towns.

For 20,000 Indian people living north of 50, the land, the forests, and the lakes are their traditional home and source of life.



## The Geological Foundation

To explain the distinctiveness of the north and to acknowledge its identity, we must first consider the land itself. The geological foundation of the entire north is the Precambrian Shield, the vast sweep of very old, very hard rock that embraces much of central Canada. In places, as the Shield was worn down through its billions of years of existence, underlying ore-bearing greenstone belts<sup>1</sup> emerged.



In the southwestern portion of the north, most of the land surface is the Shield itself, covered only by thin veneers of sand, gravel and organic material.

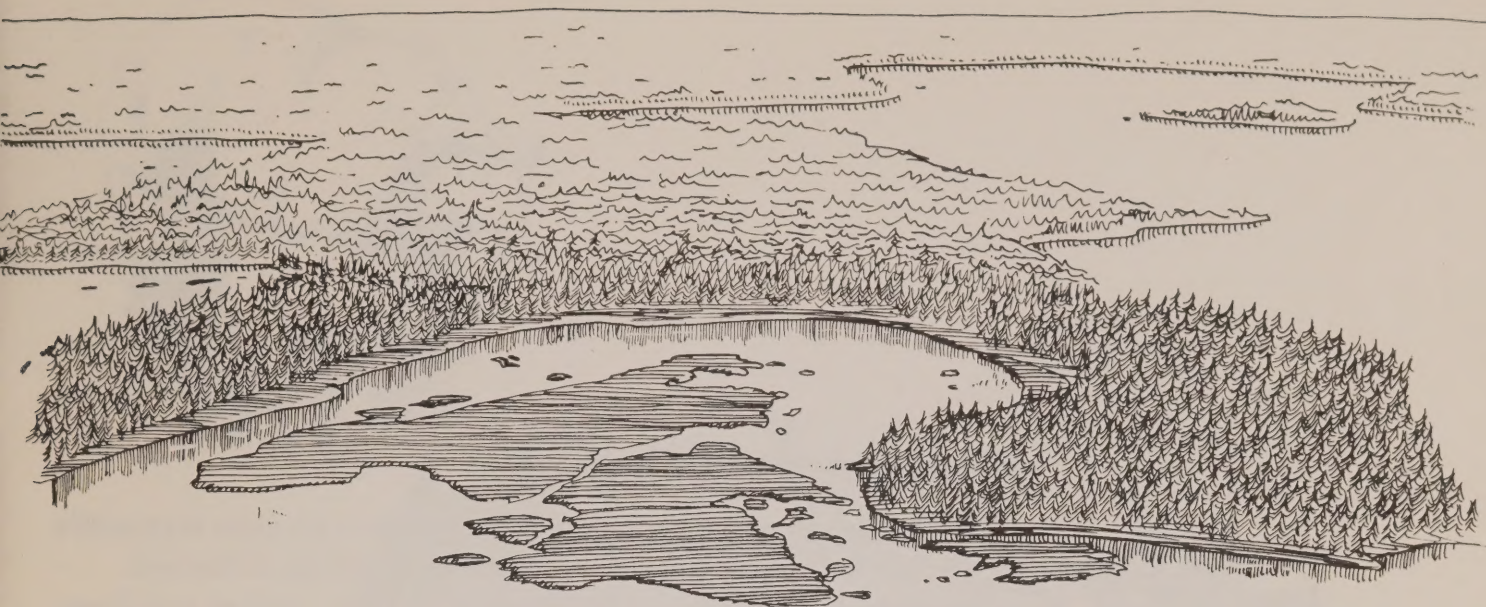
To the north and east, the Hudson Bay Lowlands extend inland from the shores of Hudson and James Bays. Here the Precambrian Shield is overlain by more recent sedimentary materials deposited by the advancing and retreating waters of ancient seas and glacial lakes. This division between the Shield and Lowlands regions is a key geographical feature of the north.

While the geological foundation of the north is the underlying Precambrian Shield and the underlying sedimentary strata in the Lowlands, most of its present surface forms result from glaciation during the last Ice Age. The advancing glaciers scoured and levelled the Shield's low mountains, piling up moraines or ridges of sand, gravel and stone; retreating, they left similar deposits, disrupted drainage patterns and created a myriad of lakes.

The outcome is a landscape of lakes, low hills and hummocky terrain in most of the Shield region, and low-lying bog and muskeg in much of the Hudson Bay Lowlands. Five main river systems, the Severn, Winisk, Attawapiskat, Albany and Moose-Abitibi, drain northward and eastward into Hudson and James Bays.

<sup>1</sup>An imprecise term for basic igneous rock.





## *Climate—A Shaping Force*

Climate is, of course, the other natural force shaping the land of the north. In comparison with similar latitudes in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the climate of the north is moderate, influenced by the waters of Hudson and James Bays. Relative to southern Ontario, however, it is severe, appreciably cooler in the summer and much colder in winter.<sup>1</sup> The north has more snow and a shorter growing season<sup>2</sup> with little more than a third of the number of frost-free days<sup>3</sup> enjoyed in Ontario's south. Permafrost, or permanently frozen ground, is continuous in the far north-west of the Lowlands, discontinuous and sporadic further south until warmer climates prevent its formation.

## *What Grows in the North?*

Clearly, neither land nor climate helps in the creation of fertile topsoil or to the growth of anything but the hardiest vegetation. Certain species of trees do grow there, spruce, jackpine, poplar, birch among others; but growth is slow. Contrary to general belief, the only dense forests of well-formed trees are in the southwestern corner of the region. Beyond that, tree growth gradually thins out, until by the shore of Hudson Bay, the trees are stunted and scattered.

Other vegetation consists largely of shrubs such as blueberries and junipers and bog plants, like waterlilies and cattails. The wild rice which grows in some of the lakes and rivers of the north is not, in fact, rice at all, but a tall aquatic plant indigenous to North America and unrelated to the rice of warmer climates.

<sup>1</sup>Mean daily temperature in July is 12°C. to 19°C.

Mean daily temperature in January is -18°C. to -24°C.

Recorded temperature extremes are 42.2°C. and -58.3°C.

<sup>2</sup>Mean annual growing season is 130 to 160 days.

<sup>3</sup>Number of frost-free days is 75 to 85.





## What Lives and Thrives?

The harsh natural environment of the north is no more favourable to wildlife than to vegetation. The number of species is limited.

The land supports moose and deer, black bears, wolves and foxes, some members of the cat family, and a variety of other fur-bearing animals in varying densities. Caribou are found towards Hudson Bay, and there are polar bears along the coast, near Cape Henrietta Maria. Pike, pickerel, whitefish, trout and other species of fish inhabit the lakes and rivers. Ducks, geese, grouse, ptarmigan, hawks, eagles, falcons and owls are notable, although over 180 species of birds have been identified. In contrast with other living creatures, insects thrive at certain seasons, and are not the least among the difficulties of life for man or beast.

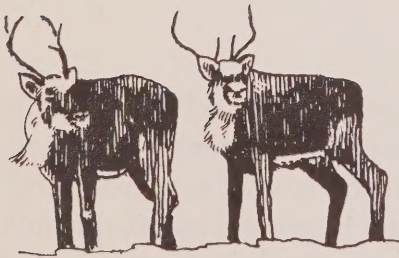
## The Early People

Although nature has not been bounteous to the north, it is not a barren desert. An inhospitable land, it permits self-sufficiency to a small human population willing to adapt itself to the demands and limitations of its environment and content to endure a rigorous life. That is what Henry Hudson found when, in 1610, he landed on the shores of the bay later named for him.

The people of the north in Henry Hudson's time were nomadic hunters, constantly on the move. Movement of game and the change of seasons dictated their migrations. These early people travelled in small bands, and though certain places were sacred to them, they had no permanent settlements.

By the very nature of their way of life, their numbers and previous history remain a mystery. They are believed to have lived in the north for many centuries. Throughout this time, there were probably not more than a few tens of thousands in all of the north. The land could support no more. Only the hardy, and the lucky, could have survived the harsh conditions of their lives.

Those early peoples spoke dialects of Cree and Ojibway, related forms within the Algonkian language group that extended over much of central North America at that time.







## *The Land – Differences in Perception*

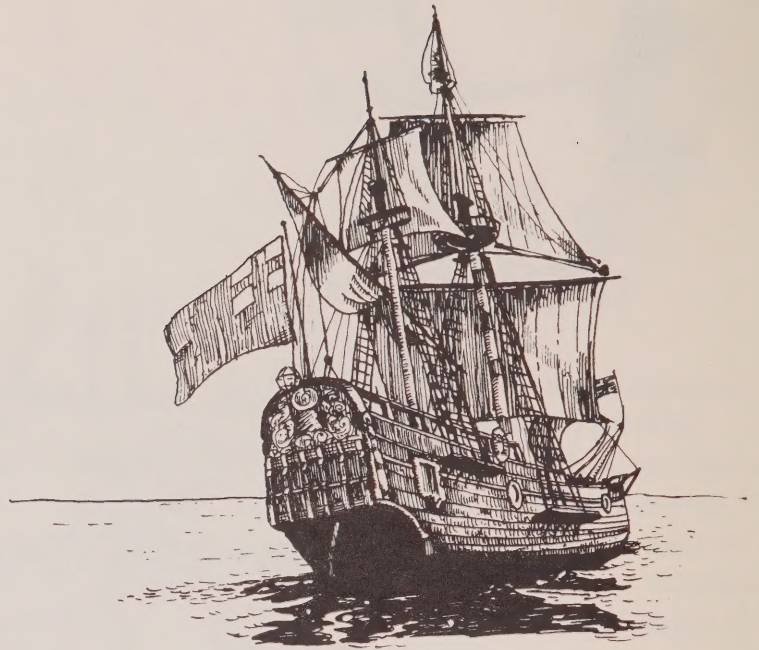
The ideas, beliefs and attitudes which people tend to take for granted, which seem to them to represent the natural order of things, are most often the products of the culture which shaped them from birth. In turn, the culture of a society is, in large measure, a response to its environment.

It is not surprising that wide gaps existed between the values and assumptions of the Indians of the north and those of the Europeans who appeared during and after the 17th century. These respective values and assumptions were derived from entirely different kinds of experience. But these differences led to at least one extremely important area of misunderstanding.

The Europeans came from agricultural societies in which people occupied the same piece of land more or less permanently and subdued nature to reap regular harvests from the land. It was natural for them to regard land as a commodity, a unit of property which was necessarily owned by someone, and which could be bought and sold.

The Indians, on the other hand, regarded themselves not as conquerors of nature but as part of it. The land supported them as it did the animals they hunted, but it did not, and could not, belong to them. It and they were embraced in the arms of the Great Spirit. This fundamental difference in perception of the nature of a person's relationship with the land later came to assume a great deal of importance. But this did not happen for two and a half centuries.





The explorers were followed by fur traders. In 1670, 60 years after Henry Hudson's arrival, King Charles II granted a charter to the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading Into Hudson's Bay.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the century, several trading posts had been established on the coasts and rivers of the north.

Neither trapping nor trading was a novelty to the Indians (archaeological discoveries provide clear evidence of earlier trade with other Indian peoples), so trading in furs with the newcomers was readily accepted. It continued for nearly 200 years, and was regarded as profitable by both sides.

To the Indians it brought tools, firearms and much else of practical utility, upon which, however, they became dependent. It also brought liquor and previously unknown diseases, afflictions which were to take a grave toll of health and human wellbeing among them.



<sup>1</sup>Now known as The Bay or The Hudson's Bay Company.





## *The Era of the Fur Trade*

Needless to say, the motivation of the fur traders was not philanthropic. Exploitation and even violence occurred. But the Company did not hold all the cards, particularly during the period of competition with its rival the Northwest Company.<sup>1</sup> Competition brought down the price of goods which the Indians purchased at the trading posts, while the two companies could be played off against each other to secure a higher price for fur.

Above all, the fur trade rarely led to fundamental conflict between natives and whites. The latter were scattered, few in number, concerned only with trade and not with settlement, occupation of land or exploitation of its resources.

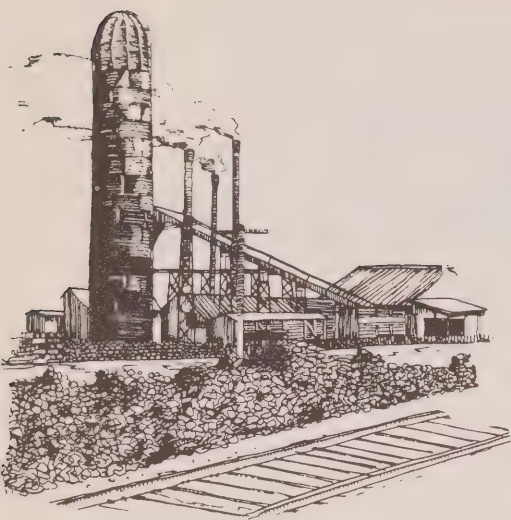
Thus for a long time the native people pursued their traditional way of life with little interference. Life, however, was increasingly affected by an ever-growing dependence on the goods supplied by the trading posts, and in time, even on employment there. As the fur-trading era drew to its close, permanent settlement was beginning to replace the nomadic life.

By the time the Hudson's Bay Company regained its original monopoly by absorbing its later rival in 1821, the fur trade was already beginning to decline due to decreasing demand and depletion of fur resources. In fact, this decline helped to weaken the Northwest Company, as did the near-disappearance of game animals as a result of fires and over-hunting. Dependence of the Indians on the trading posts increased.

By the time the new Dominion government assumed control of Rupert's Land in 1870, previously under the virtually absolute rule of the Hudson's Bay Company, the era of the fur trade was effectively over. So too was the traditional independent way of life of the Indian people.

<sup>1</sup>Founded in 1782 by a group of British and American fur traders who had taken over the old French canoe routes. In 1821, it merged with the Hudson's Bay Company.





## *The Coming of the Industrial Age*

The construction of the transcontinental railway in the last decades of the 19th century introduced a new era for northern Ontario. It was expected that the building of railways would bring agricultural settlement. To some extent it did. More importantly, the railways permitted the exploitation of timber and mineral resources. Northwestern Ontario also became a principal corridor for the shipment east of western grain.

The first railway to be built north of 50 was the National Transcontinental (Grand Trunk Pacific), in 1915, now part of the Canadian National system. A branch line was built from Fort William (Thunder Bay) to link with this line at Superior Junction, near Sioux Lookout, mainly to handle grain shipments. To encourage settlement and resource exploitation, and with visions of a thriving port on James Bay, the Ontario government financed the construction of the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway (now the Ontario Northland Railway), completed to Moosonee in 1932.

Steel rails succeeded water as the basis of communication and permanent settlement in the north. Small railway towns appeared at intervals along the line, some of them later becoming logging towns as well. Roads came after the railways, linking some of the towns with each other and with the south. In later years, both rails and roads were pushed northward to serve remote mining communities.

Thus a man-made basis for development was imposed on the geography of the north. A corridor of transportation and settlement now ran east and west for hundreds of miles just north of the 50th parallel in the Shield region. Two branches stretched northward to Red Lake and Pickle Lake. Further east, in the Lowlands region, a third branch extended north to the foot of James Bay.

The railways provided the bridgehead which opened up the north to its second “invasion” by outsiders. The first had been by water, from the sea to the east and north, with its objective, furs. The second was by land, from the south, its objectives, trees and minerals.

In part, the mounting demand for wood, much of it in the form of railway ties, was created by the very building of the railways. As a result, by the end of the 19th century the forests of the Ottawa Valley, Wisconsin and Minnesota were depleted, at a time when the demand for timber in the United States was increasing. With the forests of northern Ontario now accessible by rail, it was natural for them to be





regarded by both Canadian and U.S. lumbermen as a new source of supply. Predictably, the expansion of logging operations was generally from south to north, from the richer to the poorer woodlands. Now, in 1978 almost 11 percent of Ontario's annual timber harvest is cut north of 50. And the pressure to cut further and further north is increasing even though the quality of timber is lower.

Mining operations have also developed in a south to north pattern. Here a principal limiting factor continues to be accessibility, rather than soil or climate. The greenstone belts of the Precambrian Shield were found to contain important deposits of nickel, copper, iron, gold, silver and uranium, as well as zinc, asbestos, lead, molybdenum and other minerals.

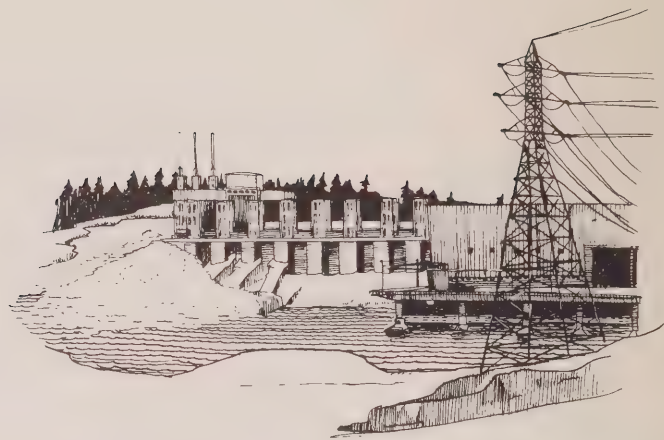
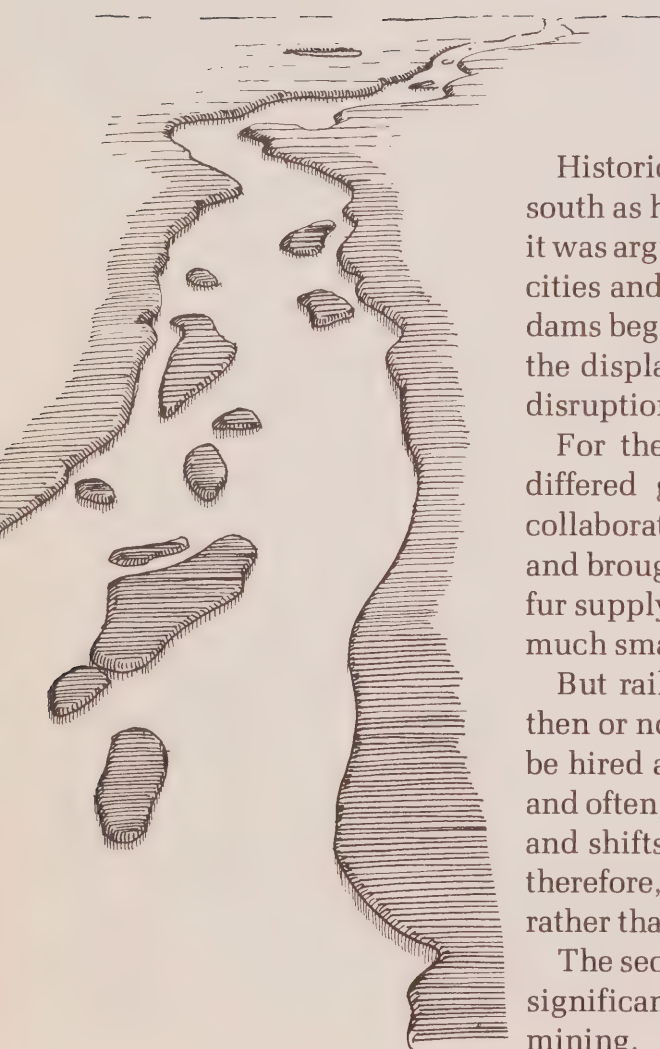
These belts occur throughout the Shield region and are presumed to extend under the sedimentary rocks of the Lowlands. Here overburden and these layers, together many metres thick, greatly hamper exploration. The sedimentary limestones, dolomites and shales are not themselves rich in minerals, though deposits of lignite (low-grade coal), fireclay, kaolin and other industrial minerals are known. The existence of oil and natural gas is possible.

Valuable minerals were known to exist in northern Ontario early in the 19th century and perhaps before, but it was railway construction that revealed important deposits and made their exploitation feasible. As with the north's forests, the railways were the key to the development of its minerals, providing a base for exploration and a means for shipping ore south for refining. Many geologists believe that further north there may be equally rich ore bodies, but their inaccessibility has helped keep them from discovery and exploitation.

North of 50, gold was found on McKenzie Island in Red Lake as early as the 1890's. Mining of gold in the north did not begin until the opening of the Red Lake Mine in 1925, followed by the Pickle Crow Mine and several other properties in the thirties. Most of these mines, either small in size or rendered uneconomic by the price of gold, closed within the next 30 years.

World War II placed great demands on Canada's industrial front and greatly stimulated mineral exploration. Beginning in the late forties, mines opened up in the Shield for zinc, copper and silver at Confederation Lake, for iron at Bruce Lake, both in the Red Lake area, and for copper at Pickle Lake.





Historically, the north's wild rivers have been viewed from the south as having great potential for hydro development. These rivers, it was argued, could be harnessed to supply electricity to the growing cities and industries below the 50th parallel. The building of power dams began north of 50, at Ear Falls in 1929, in some cases leading to the displacement of Indian communities, flooding of traplines, and disruption of fishing.

For the Indians, the second economic "invasion" of the north differed greatly from the first "invasion". The fur trade was a collaborative arrangement in which the Indians trapped the animals and brought the pelts to the trading posts. There might have been no fur supply at all without them, and certainly it would have been very much smaller.

But railway and dam construction, logging and mining did not, then or now, depend on Indian involvement or skills. Indians might be hired as unskilled labourers, but they were generally not needed and often, it seems, not wanted. The regular pattern of industry, times and shifts, was alien to them and not easily accommodated. Mostly, therefore, the Indian people could only stand by as passive witnesses, rather than join as equal participants with workers from the south.

The second difference from the days of the fur trade was even more significant. Railway building, hydro development, logging and mining, unlike fur trading, involved the actual occupation, settlement and disruption of the land, forests, lakes and rivers which were the Indians' ancestral home. This, in the eyes of the Euro-Canadians, had been legally permitted by the Indians in the treaties they had signed with government representatives in earlier days.





## The Treaties—A Story of Contention

The background, content, interpretation and observance of the treaties is a long, complex and contentious story.

The barest bones of the story are these. By their historic legal doctrine, the British explorers and settlers of North America considered that the Crown held title to the land, but recognized the Indians as possessing certain ongoing aboriginal rights to it. With the expansion of settlement it became important that these claims be legally resolved in such a way as to avoid serious impediments to the use of the land by the settlers.

Thus, the British government, and after 1867 the new Dominion government, signed a series of treaties with the Indians. These treaties gave absolute title to Indian bands under the wardship of the federal government to certain specified areas, the reserves. The treaties also guaranteed them the right to continue their traditional hunting, fishing and trapping activities on all other land not required for settlement, logging, mining and so forth, but extinguished all other Indian rights over the land.

This at least was the official view, based on European concepts of land and ownership and related rights. The Indian interpretations of the treaties, based on different concepts, have not been the same at all.

Some have argued that the terms of the treaties the Indians signed—but which they could not read—were not the terms to which they had agreed. Furthermore, the terms in the signed treaties have not always been rigorously observed by government.

In part, this last circumstance arose from the power to legislate for Indians assigned to the federal government by the British North America Act in 1867 and the vesting in the provinces of title to land and resources within their boundaries. Division of authority has meant that neither federal nor provincial government alone can ensure that treaty obligations are met.

There are three treaties in the north of Ontario. Treaty #3 and Treaty #5 cover areas in the north and southwest and were signed in 1873 and 1875 respectively. Treaty #9, which covers most of the land north of 50, was signed in 1905 with adhesions in 1929 and 1930.

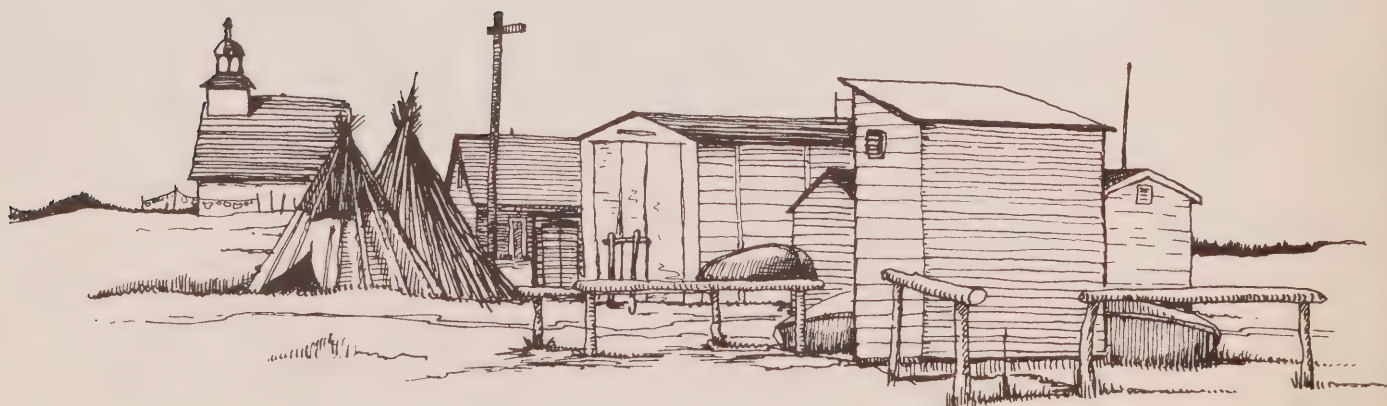




## A "Dismissed" People

The creation of the reserves under the treaties accelerated the end of a nomadic life for the Indian people. At the same time, depletion of game and fur-bearing animals and the decline of the fur trade gravely diminished the Indians' traditional means of subsistence. This was alleviated only marginally by wage-earning opportunities on the railway and in the woods and mines. The Indians were on the forgotten fringe of a society largely unconcerned about them and of an economy which did not need them. Poverty, demoralization, alcoholism and other social ills ensued.

Gradually, with the introduction of welfare, family allowances, and other forms of transfer payment and social assistance, the material lot of the Indians began to improve again, but at the price of almost total dependence. Thus, through no fault of their own, a whole generation is now accustomed to subsidization and is unfamiliar with self-reliance, either in the traditional Indian ways or in those of the Euro-Canadian wage-earner.







## *The North Today: Land and Economy*

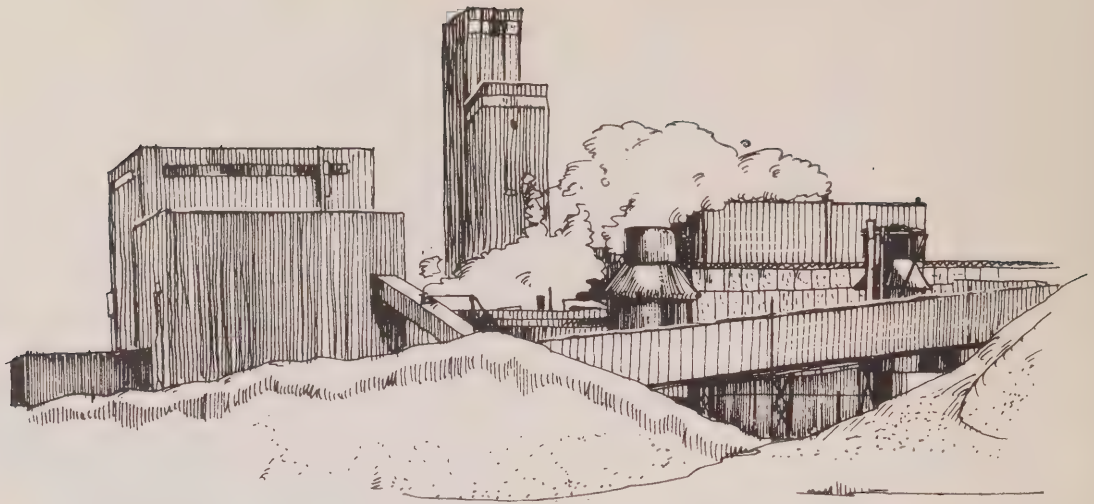
We turn now to a brief description of the north of today, as it has been shaped by geographical, historical, cultural and economic influences.

The division between the Shield and Lowlands regions remains as fundamental as ever. Most of the inhospitable Lowlands remains as it has been since the last Ice Age ended, with little trace of human activity other than a few small settlements at intervals of hundreds of miles along the coast.

Most of the Indian people in the north live in small, isolated communities widely scattered throughout the boreal forests of northwestern Ontario and dotted along the northern coastline and the major rivers of the Arctic watershed. Most other northerners live in larger communities situated just north of 50, their locations determined by access to the transcontinental railway, the harvesting of timber, the mining of minerals, and the tourists' interest in good fishing and hunting resources.

Overland transportation penetrates the Lowlands portion of the north only where the Ontario Northland Railway (ONR) carries the national rail network to the James Bay tidewater at Moosonee. Along the ONR there are a few small settlements north of the 50th parallel. Sixty miles south of Moosonee, the railway line crosses the lignite deposit at Onakawana<sup>1</sup>, the possible site of a strip mine, and perhaps even a thermal-electric generating station.

<sup>1</sup>Onakawana Development Limited has plans for a major lignite mine south of Moosonee, and a 21 year lease for the project was recently signed between the company and the Ontario Government. It has been designated for study under the Environmental Assessment Act.



By comparison, the Shield shows much more of the imprint of man, though it is still much lighter than in most of Ontario south of 50. The CN main line, forest-based industry and six active mines support several predominantly non-Indian communities in the southern part of the Shield. Nearly 1,500 people are employed in the mines and some 1,200 in logging and sawmills. The "Reed project",<sup>1</sup> as proposed, would extend logging much further into the north and would also involve the construction of a pulp mill-sawmill complex employing another 1,200 people.

The people and communities of the northern part of the region, beyond roads, mines and timber limits, are still largely Indian, although non-Indians usually hold such important positions as teacher, Ontario Provincial Police officer, and Hudson's Bay Company store manager.

Logging and mining still provide most of the industrial wage employment anywhere in the north.

A number of consequences flow from the nature of the north's economic base. It is highly vulnerable to market conditions. The world demand for pulp, wood, paper and minerals fluctuates considerably. While the wages paid benefit local people, profits do not. Such industries have limited lives as do the communities they create. Every mine is worked out sooner or later, while the forests are not being regenerated at the rate they are being cut. Industry in the north is to a greater or lesser extent environmentally disruptive and often excludes other land uses.

<sup>1</sup>Reed Ltd. has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Ontario relating to a proposed forestry complex in northwestern Ontario. This document, however, does not commit the company to proceed with this venture. The project has been designated under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act and latest plans call for hearings by the Environmental Assessment Board starting in 1980. This would follow completion of a forest inventory by the Ministry of Natural Resources, an environmental assessment by the company, and review of the assessment by the Ministry of the Environment. Reed has reported substantial losses for its past operating year and the project may very well be abandoned. Nevertheless, even if the company does not proceed with its present plans, there will be mounting pressure to harvest the existing forest resource in response to the steadily declining availability of suitable timber in other areas of the province.





However, prospects for rapid growth either in the forest industry or in mining seem limited at present.

Reed Ltd. has indicated that economic conditions are not favourable for proceeding with its plans, which would have exploited most of the north's (and Ontario's) remaining supply of commercially usable stand of virgin timber. It was news of Reed Ltd.'s project proposal which sparked legislative debate. This, in turn, prompted the Ontario government to set up a Royal Commission with a broad-ranging mandate to assess the needs of the land and of the people north of 50.

As for minerals, although ore bodies unquestionably exist in the north, their remoteness and the growth of competition from other countries suggest that the expansion of mining in the north will not be rapid.

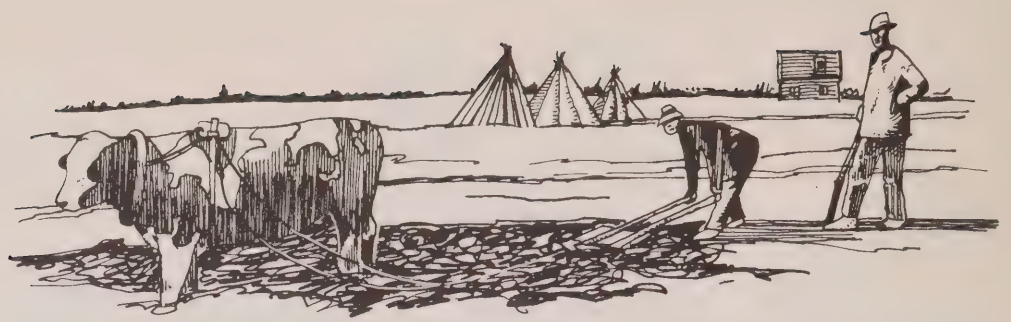
Wage employment is also provided by the service sector, notably tourism and outdoor recreation. There are over one hundred fishing and hunting camps in the north, mainly "fly-in". Most of these are in the southern portion of the Shield, but some are further north and others, for goose hunting, are located along the shores of Hudson and James Bays.

The north also contains several provincial parks, including Ontario's largest, Polar Bear Provincial Park.<sup>1</sup> On the face of it, outdoor recreation might appear fully compatible with the character of the north and the interests of its people, but in fact there are some serious conflicts, such as depletion of the fish and game upon which many Indian people depend, pollution of lakes, and the starting of forest fires.

Mercury pollution in the English-Wabigoon River System has virtually ruined the fishing and tourist industries along those rivers. As it affects the lives and livelihood of the native population, this pollution amounts to a people's tragedy.

The pollution has brought economic and social chaos to the reserves of Grassy Narrows and Whitedog.

<sup>1</sup>Total acreage of Ontario's provincial parks is 10,416,219. Acreage of Polar Bear Provincial Park alone is 5,952,000.



## Agriculture

As might be expected from what we said earlier about soil and climate, agriculture is virtually nonexistent north of 50, although there are places where crops such as potatoes have been grown in the past and other relatively small areas which may have some agricultural potential.

For Indian bands in the Kenora region, wild rice harvesting provides the main agricultural activity.

The harvesting of wild rice by the Ojibway Indians has been going on in northwestern Ontario, Minnesota and Wisconsin for centuries. It is still being carried out in the traditional manner, picking by hand from canoes.

In most areas of the north, a major exception being the Red Lake and Sioux Lookout regions, the harvesting is still largely an Indian endeavour, providing seasonal employment for hundreds of native people.

The Ontario government, on May 16, 1978, announced a policy on wild rice harvesting in response to the recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Northern Environment in its interim report of April, 1978, that wild rice be set aside for a period of five years to be developed as an economic base for the Indian people of northwestern Ontario. During this period, no new licences will be issued to non-Indians unless it can be demonstrated that the market potential can support the increased production without jeopardizing rice sales as a viable industry for the Indian people.

## Power on a Mammoth Scale

Two power development projects would, if carried out, have much more extensive consequences than any of the activities we have described. Polar Gas now has an application before the National Energy Board to construct a pipeline to convey natural gas from the Arctic Islands which would pass through northern Ontario and link up with existing gas transmission lines near Geraldton. The timing of this project now appears unclear, due to the uncertainties of when the gas might be needed, of alternate delivery methods and of the massive financial requirements. Recently, there has been considerable speculation that this project will be delayed until well into the 1990's, although it is always difficult to make predictions in the rapidly shifting energy field.



The second scheme — or more accurately, series of schemes — involves various proposals for large-scale diversion southward of rivers now flowing to the north. While these would greatly enhance water supply and power generation, the effects of any such project on the north would be drastic. Reassuringly, at present there seems little likelihood that this scheme will be pursued, or even that more modest, though still large-scale, hydroelectric projects will be carried out in the north.

## *Development and Conservation*

At this point we should deal more explicitly with a theme which has run through the foregoing discussion: that of economic exploitation—or development, if the gentler but less accurate word is preferred—versus environmental conservation.

A persistent conflict for many northern residents exists between development and conservation.

Some see the natural environment of the north as a rare surviving wilderness. It is, in some respects, unique. Parts of it are fragile and succumb easily to the effects generated by modern industry or large-scale settlement, or even to overuse by hunters or fishermen.

It is in other ways stern and hardy. To endure and survive, animals and vegetation seem tougher and more resilient than their counterparts to the south.

Some northerners believe that the environmental impact of resource extraction on the northern ecology is limited to extremely small areas. Large-scale timber cutting operations, however, inevitably do have wide-spreading effects. Mines, on the other hand, are more confined in their influence. Both have had economic and social impacts which have touched almost all northern people.

While nature is deeply important to the Indian people, both practically and spiritually, the environment in which they live is also extremely important to white northerners. Wrestling its resources from nature is a major source of the economic wellbeing of both groups. At the same time, the north's lakes and forests provide recreation, from which there are also substantial economic returns, and a lifestyle that northerners would not give up easily.

The tension between development and conservation need not be perceived as a choice between the extremes of raping the land and an end to all change.



An ideal solution would allow for retention and strengthening of the Indian's relationship with the natural environment, along with a cooperative view of the north's potential for producing economic benefits in which all northerners share.

Existent in present day Indian society is the desire to know and retain the values of the past in order to secure one's place in the scheme of the universe.

While only a handful of persons pursue an academic approach to Indian experience, native pride in one's "eternal" story, past, present and future, is a shared feeling amongst the majority of Indians.

But how can one measure the importance of the northern environment? How can its value be weighed against the economic benefits flowing from ore, pulp, pipelines and power? And above all, what rights do northerners have, or should they have, for determining how northern resources and the northern environment should be used, and for whose benefit?

Of course, the northern environment has different meanings for different northerners.

What are the legitimate rights and claims of the Indian people in particular?

This last question assumes special weight because of the marginal position of Indians relative to the wage economy. Some are employed by mining and logging companies, but these are few compared to the many unemployed Indians who either are not hired or do not seek out the employment opportunities that exist. Of course, there are difficulties in reconciling regular wage employment with traditional Indian seasonal activities such as hunting for food and harvesting wild rice. But surely many jobs in extractive industries could be designed around the traditional activities of the Indian people.

Hunting, harvesting, trapping and fishing are major components of the Indian economy and are dominantly or exclusively Indian activities in the north. Related to the seasons, they constitute only part of the pursuits of the native people. Theirs is a mixed economy. Indians play an important role in the commercial recreation sector,



with some hunting and fishing camps being Indian-owned and operated. Indians also own or work in a variety of other service industries.

Yet overall, the Indian people continue to be heavily dependent on direct financial assistance from government to supplement the very limited monetary income available to them and the food with which the land itself continues to supply them. Even with such assistance, the average family income in 1971 for reserves and other Indian communities in the north was little more than a quarter of the Ontario average.

## *The People and Their Communities*

Indians constitute the majority of the population in the north. Current and projected birth rates and settlement patterns indicate that there is little likelihood that this will change in the foreseeable future. Of a total population of 30,000 for the north as a whole, 16,500 (60%) were registered “status Indians”, recognized by the federal government as having treaty rights (1976 Census). In addition, there are an estimated 3,000 non-status Indians and Metis.

About 11,000 people, almost all Indian, live on reserves; that is to say, about one third of the entire population of the north. The birth rate of these people is appreciably above the provincial average. Another 8,000 people, both Indian and white, live in small settlements whose populations are tending to decline. The remainder, about 11,000 people, live in the six predominantly Euro-Canadian centres of Sioux Lookout, Red Lake, Ear Falls, Balmertown, Nakina and Pickle Lake and in the predominantly native community of Moosonee.

All but Moosonee are in the Shield and all depend on logging, mining or the railway for economic survival.

Sioux Lookout is the largest community north of 50. It has 3,100 residents. Like other northern communities, it makes do without the many amenities and luxuries that are taken for granted in the south. Services there, for obvious reasons of distance and isolation, cost more.

Sandy Lake is the biggest reserve with an on-reserve population of 1100.

This unique pattern of settlement is a notable characteristic of the north. Although the small population of the north is spread over a





vast area, almost everyone lives in some kind of settlement or “urban community” rather than in isolated dwellings. Without agriculture, there can be no equivalent to the south’s rural farm population.

There are over 70 communities altogether, and they vary a good deal in size and nature. Some are large enough to be called towns. Others consist of only a handful of dwellings. Some are predominantly Euro-Canadian and were spawned by a single resource-based industry. Others are predominantly Indian, either on or off reserve, with little economic reason for existence.

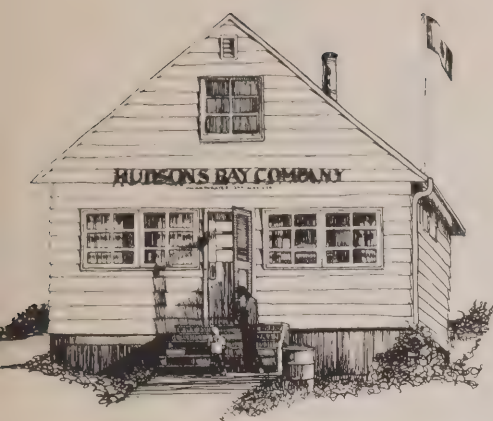
All are small by provincial standards. Some are extremely isolated but all are far from large urban centres. None has a diversified economic base with the promise of permanence. To varying degrees, therefore, all share problems stemming from a lack of economic self-sufficiency and poverty (mainly the Indian communities), or economic insecurity (mainly the Euro-Canadian communities). All face difficulties imposed by costly or nonexistent services and must cope with limited and expensive commodities.

## *Transportation and Communication*

The isolation of the typical community of the north has been alleviated to some extent since the Second World War by improvements in transportation and communications. Those communities in the southern part of the Shield and south of James Bay, including all the predominantly non-Indian communities, are now accessible by rail or road or both. The settlements along the coast are served by a federal government-operated barge service out of Moosonee.

Ten of the largest centres throughout the north are linked by scheduled air services. The rest, including most of the Indian communities, can be reached only by charter or private aircraft. A few have landing strips, but most must rely on aircraft equipped with floats in summer and skis in winter to land on lakes or rivers. These communities are virtually inaccessible during freeze-up and break-up.





Almost all the settlements of the north can now communicate with the outside world by radio-telephone. Their inhabitants can receive CBC radio broadcasts, although television is not yet generally available. However, CBC-TV service is currently being expanded to include most of the north.

## *Services and Amenities*

Most northern communities make do without many of the services and amenities that are taken for granted in the south.

Only the larger centres have services such as sewerage and water, electricity, recreation, medical care and education. The smaller communities have some of these, but often rudimentary in form. In many Indian communities, electricity, running water and indoor toilets can be found only in the school, the teacher's residence and the band office.

The Hudson's Bay Company continues to play an important role in Indian communities, although less significantly than in the past. The company still has stores in many communities north of 50 and is the sole retail outlet in several of these.

There are six hospitals: Sioux Lookout has two, Red Lake, Fort Albany, Attawapiskat and Moose Factory have one each. These hospitals, along with associated services such as nurse practitioners and visiting doctors and dentists, serve as health centres for the entire north. Patients may be sent, if necessary, to hospitals further south, while more serious cases are sent to hospitals as distant as Winnipeg, Thunder Bay or Toronto.

In the Indian communities or reserves, medical services are the responsibility of the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). Depending upon the size of the population, they range from a single nurse's aide or community health worker to nursing stations or clinics. Some communities are served only by visiting nurses and doctors. Others rely on a combination of these arrangements, along with air transportation to northern hospitals.





Elementary education is reasonably available to most northern residents. Most communities have their own elementary school, from junior or senior kindergarten to Grade 8, or, in some cases, to Grade 10. The schools are either ordinary public schools, private (denominational) schools, or DIAND schools on Indian reserves. Education beyond the elementary level is harder to get in the north.

The north's high schools which go beyond Grade 10 are located at Red Lake, Sioux Lookout and Moosonee. Students who do not live in these centres must either commute long distances daily by bus or, with the help of a government living allowance, take temporary lodgings in a centre with a high school. Post-secondary education is not readily available in the north. A few night-school courses are offered at a few of the larger communities upon request through Lakehead University and Confederation College.

## *Local Government—How Practical?*

Another unusual and curious feature of the north is the parallel existence of two independent sets of governmental authority and responsibility. Outside the reserves, provincial jurisdiction prevails as it does elsewhere in Ontario. Some 11,000 people — roughly the same number as live on reserves — live in seven incorporated municipalities. Elsewhere, in the unorganized communities, public services are mainly provided by the provincial government, although local special purpose bodies such as local roads boards and recreation commissions also have a role.

During the past decade, repeated attempts to create institutional arrangements that would provide a greater degree of self-government have come to nothing. The reasons are not entirely clear, but certainly the small population, limited financial resources, and great distances together constitute a formidable obstacle to the creation of a practical system of local government in the north.

Under the provisions of the British North America Act and the Indian Act, the Indian reserves fall under the responsibility of the federal government. In general, although there are exceptions, each reserve is occupied by a band of status Indians, and each band has an





elected council and chief. Under the provisions of the Indian Act, authority for certain matters may be delegated to the band council. However, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development generally retains the responsibility for many kinds of services such as health, education and housing, which outside the reserve are supplied by a local agency or by the province.

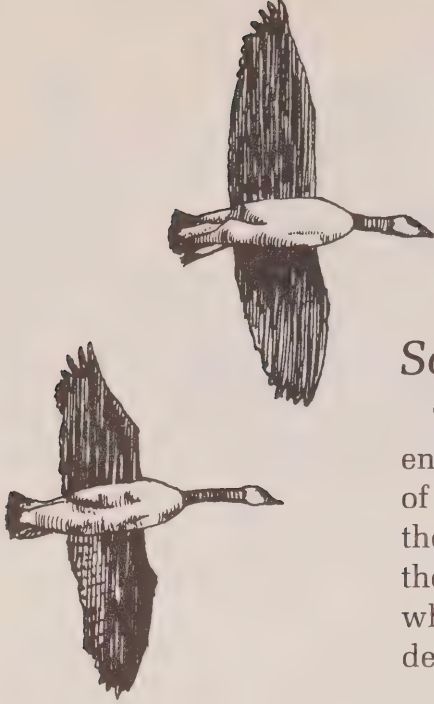
Such services may in fact be provided on behalf of DIAND by another federal department or, through agreement, by a provincial agency (the Ontario Provincial Police, for example, police many reserves). Since other government departments or ministries, both federal and provincial, have important responsibilities in the north (the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Canada are examples), a remarkable proliferation of functionaries from two levels of government is in one way or another involved in the lives and welfare of approximately 30,000 people. The potential for jurisdictional conflict, and bureaucratic delay and confusions, is substantial.

## *Evolution of the Grand Councils*

While the band council is the only Indian political entity that is afforded statutory recognition, the chiefs of the bands which adhere to Treaty #3 or Treaty #9 respectively constitute the Grand Councils of the two treaties. Although the Grand Councils were formed only during the last decade, they have achieved considerable stature and influence as representatives of the Indian community.

Recently, leaders of the treaty organizations and other chiefs have started to meet regularly with the responsible federal and provincial ministers, in a continuing attempt to resolve outstanding issues. Some observers see this as a manifestation of the self-confidence that has emerged from a growing awareness among the Indian people of their identity, history, traditions and ancestral beliefs. Others stress changing governmental attitudes and a recognition that self-reliance is likely the key to improving the lives of the Indian people.

Differences of opinion exist between leaders. Clearly, there is no more unanimity among the Indians of the north than there would be among any group of comparable size. Equally clear is the widespread determination that a new start should be made to define the relationship between them and the wider society.



## *Some Concluding Observations*

The land, the forests, the tundra, the lakes and rivers, the physical environment of the north obviously have special value in themselves, of significance not only to the Indians and whites of the north but to the province and the nation. But apart from these natural attributes, the north contains resources (of mineral and timber, for example), which are assets that may well be needed and consequently developed in the years ahead.

At present, a quickening in the rate of resource development is unlikely, given the world economy and its demand for northern products. As a result, there is likely to be only moderate expansion in the north's present wage economy and in the wage-earning employment opportunities for northerners.

These Euro-Canadian communities of the north and those of the Indian people are tiny, isolated dots scattered over a vast landscape, either dependent on a single industry which is destined to close one day, or dependent on government cheques and whatever the land and water will provide. They are difficult and expensive to get to and from, far from all but the most basic of services, with high prices and a variety of inconveniences as part of everyday living. Yet despite all of this, these communities do provide a way of life which for many is satisfying and rewarding. This is a repeated declaration of people in the north.

Two-thirds of the people living north of 50 are Indians, descendants of nomadic tribes who had inhabited this area for unknown centuries before Europeans came to North America. Their beginnings, their origins are part of an historical puzzle, a challenge to world scholarship and to their own researchers. These Cree and Ojibway people look at their land and embrace it. They are inheritors of the past, guardians of the present and protectors of the future.

To a large extent, the Indians maintain a way of life based on their culture and their traditions which differentiate them from other northerners.

There are today some 3,000 Metis and non-status Indians living near or north of 50. Because of their Indian ancestry, they find that white society rejects them as equals. They do not share equitably in employment opportunities and wealth.

For the most part, the Metis and non-status Indians want development and a share in its benefits, but not at any cost. They, too, have a reliance upon the land. Many of them continue to hunt, trap





and fish, a life-style they share with the status Indian. The Metis and non-status Indians are often as unwelcome on the reserves as they are in white society. Unlike the status Indians, they do not even have broken treaty promises to support their cry for justice. The Metis and non-status Indians must not become the forgotten people in attempts to resolve the issues dividing the white and treaty Indian peoples of the north.

The Indians themselves, while generally isolated and poor, are seeking an acceptable relationship with Euro-Canadian society. They are striving to extricate themselves from dependence, to achieve social and economic health for their communities, and to have the option of following a unique way of life that sacrifices neither their cultural heritage nor all the benefits of the larger society.

## *The Legacy of Colonialism*

Disparate though they may seem, the social aspects of Ontario north of 50 are in different ways the legacy of three centuries of treating the land coldly for gain, or as some would put it, of colonialism.

It would not be true to say that the interests of the north itself, and northerners, have never been considered. However, for the most part, they have been identified and promoted as they were perceived by missionaries, teachers and government officials from the south. Real northern interests have been a minor factor at best in influencing changes that have taken place.

It is this perception and treatment of the north that lies behind the ongoing polarized “exploitation-vs-preservation” view of the natural environment. Behind the current dependence of the northern wage economy on world markets lie the difficulties of small, scattered, economically fragile communities; and behind the isolation, demoralization and deprivation of the Indian people lies the question for all Canadians of our basic humanity.

The problems that have been created by the “exploitive” perception of the north cannot now be solved quickly or easily, even if this view were to vanish overnight. The continued existence of the “exploitive” view is seen as a root cause by some. They ask: “Who benefits from the trees cut down and the ore dug up north of 50? What decisions made in Moosonee or Big Trout Lake about the north compare in importance with those made in Ottawa, Toronto, London, New York or Brussels?”



Yet government has attempted to redress some imbalances caused by southern dominance. And the companies extracting northern resources can fairly claim that they are now more respectful of the human and natural environment than was once the case.

On the government side, there is evidence of some honest attempts to redefine policy objectives and to redirect programs in accordance with northern interests as these are perceived by politicians and civil servants. These attempts, however, seem to be hampered by the “blind men and the elephant” syndrome, by the preoccupation of each department with its own interests and responsibilities and with the particular aspect of the north to which these concerns lead. There is a need for initiatives either at the federal or the provincial level of government, in enlisting the people of the north to help establish goals for the north and to help reorient the efforts of the government accordingly. Perceived from the north, all too often, “outside” commercial or departmental interests seem to determine decisions.

Examples of the anxieties of the people of the north can be drawn from the provincial level alone.

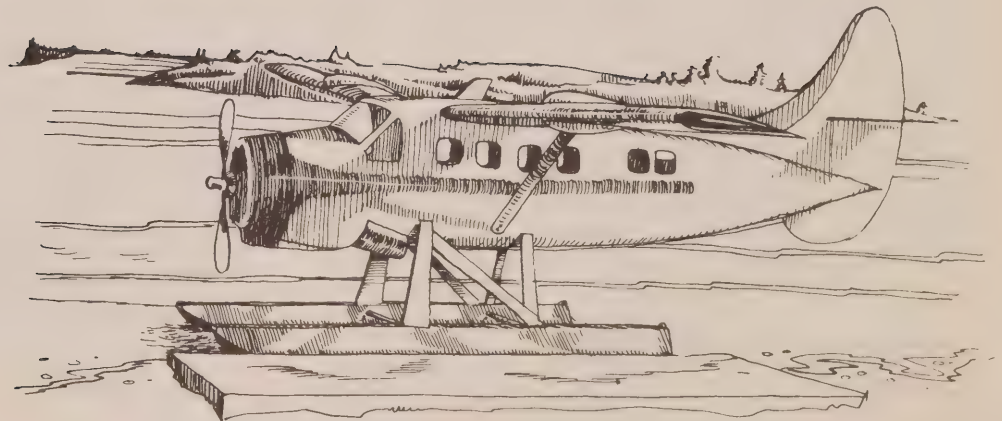
They point out that five years ago, an Ontario government task force made a number of recommendations concerning the proposal to exploit the Onakawana lignite deposit. In general these recommendations were intended to achieve two objectives: a) to protect the natural environment; and b) to ensure that the project would be carried out in such a way as to make the greatest possible contribution to the wellbeing of the people of the whole area. Since then, the Environmental Assessment Act has been passed, and its application to the project will probably achieve the first objective, northerners believe, but neither it nor any other existing legislation, they claim, is designed to achieve the second. As a consequence, concern for the wellbeing of the people may clearly be neglected. So goes prevailing opinion in the north.



In a rather similar fashion, the West Patricia Land Use Plan program will enlist public participation in setting land use priorities for most of the Shield, but only within the established framework of legislation, policy and departmental responsibility. Native people fear that their interests and concerns will not be served within that framework.

It is true that the Ontario government's regional strategies for northern Ontario are intended to coordinate all provincial government programs towards the achievement of regional objectives, but these are prepared with little participation by the public at large — effectively, none at all by Indians — and their orientation is clearly “southern”. On the economic side they seem to reflect a conventional preoccupation with employment and income generation, mainly south of 50, and little awareness of the possible alternatives for the north that may lie in small-scale industry and “appropriate technology”.

But there is evidence of change. On the basis of presently expressed concern, neither government nor industry any longer perceives the north exclusively in terms of “a storehouse of riches”. Indeed the very existence of this Royal Commission is evidence of an awareness of the people north of 50 of their own place on the land.



# APPENDIX A

## North of 50 Fact Sheet

AREA: 214,000 square miles (554,400 km<sup>2</sup>)



### POPULATION: (approx. 1976)

|                             |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Registered status Indians:  | 16,500             |
| Non-status and Metis:       | <u>3,000-3,500</u> |
| Total native population     | 19,500-20,000      |
| Non-native population       | 10,000             |
| Total population            | 30,000             |
| Total population of Ontario | 8,441,000          |

### DENSITY:

0.13 persons per square mile (one person for every 7 square miles)

### POPULATION GROWTH RATE: Average Annual (1971-76)

|                             |      |
|-----------------------------|------|
| All Ontario:                | 1.4% |
| North of 50:                | 1.3% |
| All Ontario status Indians: | 2.0% |
| Indians north of 50:        | 2.8% |

Estimated population north of 50 for year 2001: 39,000

### SETTLEMENTS:

- 70-75 settlements north of 50
- 35 of these are native
- settlements range in population from 3,106 (Sioux Lookout) to 2 (Superior Junction).

|                |               |       |
|----------------|---------------|-------|
| Municipalities | Sioux Lookout | 3,106 |
|                | Red Lake      | 2,290 |
|                | Balmertown    | 2,047 |
|                | Ear Falls     | 1,963 |
|                | Moosonee      | 1,231 |
|                | Pickle Lake   | 713   |
|                | Nakina        | 680   |

### Native settlements:

- 35 native settlements
- approximately 80% (13,000 of 16,500) of registered status Indians live on Indian reserves or in Indian settlements (Crown land)



# AVERAGE FAMILY INCOME: (1971)

|   |          | % of Ontario |
|---|----------|--------------|
| Ontario:  | \$10,661 |              |
| Ontario north of 50:                            | 7,064    | 66%          |
| Indian reserves and<br>settlements north of 50: | 3,034    | 28%          |

## SERVICES:

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <i>Health</i>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 6 hospitals</li> <li>— 8 federal nursing stations</li> </ul>  |
| <i>Education</i>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— most communities have an elementary school (kindergarten to grades 8 or 10)</li> <li>— three high schools north of 50 (up to Grade 13 when enrollment is sufficient) — located at Red Lake, Sioux Lookout, Moosonee.</li> </ul> |
| <i>Transportation</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— all non-native communities accessible by road or rail</li> <li>— 27 of 35 (75%) native communities are accessible only by air</li> <li>— there are 17 air strips north of 50 (by end of 1978).</li> </ul>                       |

## INDUSTRY:

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>Mining</i>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— jobs (1976): 1454</li> <li>— operating mines: 6</li> <li>— minerals being mined: gold, silver, iron, copper, zinc.</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Logging</i>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— jobs (logging and sawmills — 1976): approx. 1,200</li> <li>— output: approx. 11% of provincial annual cut</li> <li>— destination: mainly south of 50 to pulp and paper mills</li> <li>— 1 large sawmill at Hudson.</li> </ul> |
| <i>Commercial Fishing</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— output (1975): 1.25 million pounds</li> <li>— value: \$370,000 (3.3% of prov. total)</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Trapping</i>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— value (1977): \$1.4 million (6.6% of provincial total)</li> </ul>   |

## PROJECTS:

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <i>Onakawana</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— proponent: Onakawana Development Ltd., wholly owned subsidiary of Manalta Coal Ltd. of Calgary</li> <li>— proposal: strip mine the 190 million ton Onakawana lignite deposit. Produce electricity in a 1000 megawatt on-site thermal generating station or briquette the coal for use elsewhere.</li> <li>— location: 60 miles south of Moosonee beside the Ontario Northland Railway line. The proponent has signed a 21 year mining lease which is subject to the project meeting the conditions set out in the Environmental Assessment Act (1975).</li> </ul> |
|------------------|--|

- jobs: construction period (3-6 years) — 300 for mine  
2000 for power project  
operational period — 200 for mine  
150 for generating plant

- costs: \$100 million to develop mine  
\$1 billion to build power plant

#### *Reed*

- proponent: Reed Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of Reed Paper Ltd., controlled by Reed International Ltd. of England
- proposal: integrated kraft pulp mill (1,200 tons of pulp per day) and saw mill (180 million board feet per annum) in the Ear Falls — Red Lake area. Reed has stated that present economic conditions render the outcome of the project uncertain. The project is subject to the Environmental Assessment Act (1975).
- cost: \$400 million for mill
- jobs: 1,200 in mill
- forest resources: 18,983 square miles of forest being inventoried by Ministry of Natural Resources.

#### *Polar Gas*

- proponent: Polar Gas Limited
- proposal: natural gas pipeline from Melville Island in the eastern Arctic to just east of Longlac, Ontario  
portion: 437 miles. The project is subject to an environmental review by the federal government.





## APPENDIX B

Mr. Justice E. P. Hartt  
Recommendations and Proposals for Action  
*Interim Report of the  
Royal Commission on the Northern Environment  
April 4, 1978*

- (1) Onakawana Development Limited and the Ministry of the Environment should take immediate steps to discuss fully and openly the planned environmental assessment of the proposed lignite mine south of Moosonee with local and affected groups and that the company undertake to meet their concerns in its assessment.
- (2) A complete review and assessment of the West Patricia Planning process, in relation to other relevant programs of the Ontario government, and with special emphasis on the "Reed tract", should be carried out by the Commission, with the proposals of the Ministry of Natural Resources being considered as the focal point of the review.
- (3) A task force of northern residents should be appointed to investigate and recommend ways for the people of the north to become effectively involved in the making of decisions by government ministries and agencies that affect their lives and communities.
- (4) A committee should be formed, composed of ministerial-level representatives of the federal and Ontario governments and representatives of the Indian people. The committee would attempt to resolve, through negotiation, issues raised by its members, and in particular would address questions of devolution of authority to govern local affairs and access to resources for the Indian people. A small secretariat, acceptable to all parties, should be established to support the committee.
- (5) As its first priority, the committee should address the plight of the Indian communities of Whitedog and Grassy Narrows. Methods to ensure access to resources and viable community economies, along with related supportive programs should be considered jointly by the committee and the communities. To facilitate this, a mutually acceptable fact finder should be appointed to review and report on available information and options within 90 days.
- (6) The government of Ontario should not implement any new policy on wild rice which would weaken the Indians' position in this industry in the north. During the next five years, the Indians should be given the opportunity to develop a viable wild rice industry on their own. To foster this, no new licences to harvest rice should be granted to non-Indians during this period. The government should provide assistance, for example, by examining the influence of water control structures on the productivity of the harvests, by appropriate research into improved growing and harvesting methods, and by necessary training programs.

## APPENDIX C

### *Statement by The Honourable William G. Davis, Premier of Ontario, to the legislature, Tuesday, May 16, 1978, Re: The Hartt Commission*

I would like to report to the House on some conclusions reached by the Government as a result of the Interim Report and Recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Northern Environment.

The Ministries involved with this document have now had the opportunity to talk with Mr. Justice Hartt to clarify details of his recommendations. In addition, I have met with Mr. Justice Hartt to discuss the implications of certain recommendations and the direction and role he foresees for the Commission in the future. We have also had the benefit of direct communications with representatives of Treaty #3 and Treaty #9 Indians in which they express strong support for the work of Mr. Justice Patrick Hartt and the recommendations in his report.

As a result of these activities and with a view to moving forward with the Commission's studies of that part of the Province lying north of the 50th parallel, it is timely to indicate our commitment to specific recommendations and the overall goals of the Commission.

It is the Government's view that this study can play an important role in the creative development of the north, consistent with the goals and ambitions of the people of Northern Ontario and with the need to strike an appropriate balance between environmental concerns and a pattern of economic development of benefit to the entire province. A central theme of the Report is the necessity of addressing the disadvantaged position of native people.

Thus, the Government has no difficulty in supporting Mr. Justice Hartt's outline of the tasks he sees the Commission dealing with in the next stage of this study, which will sharpen the focus of the Commission's future activities.

First, is the review and assessment of the West Patricia Planning process by the Commission, with the Ministry of Natural Resources' proposals as the focal point of the review.

Second, is the Commission's input into the environmental assessment process surrounding the development of lignite deposits by Onakawana Development Ltd.

Third, I support the concept that northern residents should be more directly involved in the decision-making process of government. Whether this can best be achieved by a task force or by other mechanisms is a topic which the Commission might wish to pursue further.



Now I would like to deal with those recommendations which relate to the future of northern Indian communities. The Government would like to reaffirm its commitment to the recommendations by the Commission for a tripartite process to be directed by a Committee composed of ministerial level representatives of the federal and provincial governments and representatives of the Chiefs of Ontario. As I noted in my previous statement, this process is underway and a Tripartite Council has already been set up.

With Mr. Justice Hartt we see the need, through this mechanism, to explore, on a broad scale, matters of concern to Indians, including the development of economic self-reliance and self-government in local matters.

The Government considers it of paramount importance that the three parties to this Tripartite Council give urgent attention to the necessity of determining such basic matters as jurisdiction and delivery of service. A tripartite working group is being set up to deal with these matters.

We believe that without closer collaboration, clarification of roles and responsibilities, and reduction of inter-agency and intergovernmental duplication and conflict, no ultimate solution to the problems of native peoples is likely to develop.

In recent discussions with Mr. Justice Hartt he has advised that in the resolution of some issues the tripartite process could be strengthened by the appointment of independent chairmen acceptable to all parties. These chairmen would be directed to mediate issues referred by the parties and to report to the Tripartite Ministerial Council. We welcome and accept this elaboration of the original recommendation.

We accept Mr. Justice Hartt's recommendation that the special problems of Whitedog and Grassy Narrows should be addressed by a task force working within the tripartite process. Last week the Chiefs of these Reserves presented their views and proposal to initiate this process at a meeting with senior government representatives.

Ontario will lend full support to this effort to implement social and economic development to rehabilitate these Indian communities. We agree to the appointment of an independent chairman for this particular task. In addition, factfinders have been appointed by the Bands. We understand that this recommendation has the full support of the Chiefs of Ontario. Indicative of Ontario's willingness to assist in this area is the recently announced program to provide additional employment opportunities to residents of these two communities, access to mechanical wild rice harvesting equipment, and production of plant food from a commercial fishing operation.

Careful consideration has been given to the recommendation that wild rice be set aside for a period of five years for the development of an economic base for the Indian people in northwestern Ontario. During this period no new licences would be issued to non-Indians.

Mr. Justice Hartt has explained that his recommendation is based on the premise that present markets are limited and future markets are uncertain. He believes that any expansion of wild rice production by non-Indian producers could jeopardize the Indians' chance of success in developing wild rice as a viable industry. These premises require future testing.

In considering this recommendation we are aware of the concerns of non-Indians, non-Status Indians and Metis who have strongly indicated their wish to have greater access to wild rice harvesting areas.

Ontario has already agreed to deal with this complex and sensitive issue through the tripartite process and the Tripartite Working Group on wild rice is now being established. In order to support this approach and in the interest of arriving as quickly as possible at solutions satisfactory to all parties, Ontario puts forward the following five year program:

1. In accordance with current policy only Indian Bands will be licenced to harvest Wild Rice in the Kenora and Dryden district for the coming 1978 season.
2. Outside the Kenora and Dryden district all 1977 licences will be renewed for 1978 and annually thereafter.
3. Effective immediately Ontario will extend its efforts to assist Indian licencees to develop appropriate technology and to increase utilization of the available crop with the primary objective of establishing an economic base for the involved Indian communities.
4. The Tripartite Working Group on Wild Rice should give the highest priority to the determination of current and future markets for Ontario wild rice. A first report should be made no later than January of 1979.
5. No additional licences will be issued to non-Indians during the next five years unless it can be demonstrated to the Tripartite Working Group that market potential for Ontario wild rice is sufficient to support an increased share of production by non-Indians without jeopardizing our efforts to establish wild rice production as a viable economic base for the Indian people.
6. In keeping with the spirit of the Hartt Commission that all northerners should be involved in the determination of northern issues, we propose the Tripartite Working Group on Wild Rice be expanded to include representation of the Ontario Wild Rice Producers Association and the Ontario Metis and Non-Status Indian Association.





